

CHILD STUDY

PARENTS AND MENTAL HYGIENE

What Does Mental Hygiene Offer
Childhood at the End of 1926?

By ESTHER L. RICHARDS

The Formation of Life Patterns

By LESLIE B. HOHMAN

The Anxious Parent

By LOUISE BRINK



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What Does Mental Hygiene Offer Childhood at the End of 1926?

By Esther L. Richards*

THE adoption of the mental hygiene point of view calls for the cultivation of attitudes in ourselves and in others that are contrary to accepted habits of thinking. We are confronted with a concept of mind as an integrated part of the human organism, and not as an entity set apart from the body and governed by laws of will-power, self-control and ethical suasion.

"The problem of happiness and success," said Dr. Adolf Meyer two years ago at the National Conference of Social Workers, "is becoming recognized as dependent, to an overwhelming extent, upon the condition of the organism—its heredity, its proper nutrition and growth, its habit training; and not only on the acquisition of knowledge and of some practical resources, but also on the emotional attitude of the individual, the development of his innate capacities, and a reasonable respect for his instinctive desires and tendencies."

Organized mental hygiene has occupied itself with the functioning of the individual as a whole. It has gone about the collection of facts,—facts which have taken its workers into the home, not as statistical agents gathering routine social data, but as intelligent observers of more subtle matters—the relationship of parents towards each other and towards their children, the role of family thinking in religion, school training, respect for civic institutions and ideas of health and sickness.

From the home mental hygiene logically turns to the school, where the average child spends six or seven years of his life and has his first taste of meeting the adaptive requirements of ordinary social relationships. Here in the school the psychology of pedagogy has made splendid contribu-

tions to education in developing principles which determine what a child should learn from year to year and how he should be taught, but it has gathered little practical information for the guidance of parents and teachers in the handling of problems in the instinctive life of childhood.

The goal of education has always been the development of character, or personality, or whatever else one wishes to call that combination which enables a person to get on in life with a reasonable measure of achievement and happiness. To this end the education of former generations focused its attention almost exclusively upon academic subjects, believing that one group strengthened the memory, another the reasoning, a third the imagination, etc. From the very mastery of this subject-matter, it was argued, must inevitably come accuracy, concentration, retentiveness, judgment, self-control, and other evidences of sound intellectual habit formation. To educational psychology we owe the abandonment of this old point of view in favor of a careful analysis of processes by which the child gains knowledge concerning the world around him.

But the mind of the child, like the mind of the adult, can no longer be considered synonymous with his intellectual functioning—popularly known as brains, or gray matter. The mind of childhood includes the whole range of mental responses, moods and cravings, feelings and imaginations, play-reactions and social relationships. Here are factors of daily human experience which cannot be evaluated by examination or quiz or any other form of academic standardization.

Everywhere one sees men and women who show

*Excerpts from an address delivered at the Conference "Concerning Parents," Baltimore, Md., November 30, 1926. The complete paper will appear in *Mental Hygiene* for January, 1927.

a surprising discrepancy between their record of achievement and happiness in subsequent years. In the strife of competition, the application of what the individual child or adolescent has acquired during the school period is made possible or impossible by virtue of habit responses with which he is equipped. Medicine, law, teaching, engineering, farming, home-making, nursing, stenography, business, want trained men and women who have good habits of concentration and resourcefulness, but above all, they want men and women who can get along with each other, and their superiors and subordinates; they want men and women who can stand ridicule and criticism, who can persevere in the face of jealousy and friction; who will not wilt under discouragement, or flare up in anger and pitch their jobs. In short, the skill of the mechanical or professional artisan constitutes only about fifty per cent of his market value in any sphere. The other fifty per cent is made up of temperamental characteristics, native and trained. Ask the average school (public or private) or college for a statement as to a student's fitness for a business position or graduate work and one gets personal impressions that are largely prejudiced likes or dislikes, and contain no evidence of the student's behavior reactions throughout his course except for the record of academic work. What, for example, was his manner of work with regard to endurance, distractability, fatigue, regularity? What was his reaction to competition, responsibility, discouragement, criticism? What evidence did he show of self-reliance and self-direction, or dependence and inferiority? What could be said of his emotional control? Here are factors which count tremendously in helping an individual find his place in life, yet formal education does not include them in its official records.

In looking over the files of a correctional institution for girls in one state, it was found that seventy-five per cent had long Juvenile Court records extending back into the school period of ten to fourteen years, yet none of the schools approached for a statement about these girls had any record of delinquent behavior. Their records showed that these girls had repeated grades, had frequent absences; that they had tonsil and adenoid trouble, and eye strain, and carious teeth, but except for a rumor lingering in the mind of the principal or one of the older teachers, no hint of adaptive difficulties was found. It would seem, then, that with the intellectual capacity of the child belonging to the teacher and the body of

the child to the Department of Health, the other behavior responses must go begging.

Dependency, alcoholism, promiscuity and other vicious trends are the cumulative results of a bad start in childhood. Mental hygiene is now embarked upon a study of the beginning of these trends. We know that such side-tracking of normal childish energy is very apt to occur in children who are constitutionally handicapped by mental retardation and also by emotional instability. But aside from this constitutionally handicapped group, we know that delinquency arises in normally endowed children as a result of unwholesome environment, or a bad start in parental training.

There are those who contend that it is not the school's business to concern itself with the adaptations of childhood. Yet the school age is laden with a multitude of possibilities of adaptation which make or destroy the organism's happiness and satisfaction in future years. Educational statistics state that fifty-five per cent of public school children are inadequately ministered to by a school curriculum which is made for the average child: thirty per cent of public school children are above average intelligence and twenty-five per cent below average intelligence. Here, then, is a large group of children who, failing to get proper satisfaction through normal channels for the expression of energy, may seek it elsewhere.

The defects of poor legal machinery are as easily seen as those of school systems. Probation, correctional training, parole and follow-up work are admittedly weak in every part of the country. Yet we have not enough facts at our disposal today to hold any one institution of our social system responsible for delinquency.

As parents, teachers, physicians, social workers, we must learn to think things through for ourselves and not spin them out upon the surface of our minds in the belief that we are keeping up to date. There is no harm, if we enjoy it, in weaving into our vocabulary "inferiority complex," "Oedipus syndrome," "narcissism," "the subconscious mind," "subnormal," etc., provided that such terminology does not paralyze the normal co-ordinating function of our reasoning and judgment.

To gather facts and study them for what they are worth, undistracted by the temptation to prophesy and develop formulae, is a slow and tedious process. No machine has yet been discovered to separate the ingredients of behavior. Yet if mental hygiene is to help in solving the problems of human distress, the necessity for doing this becomes clearer with each year.

The Formation of Life Patterns

By Leslie B. Hohman*

BY the term "life patterns" I mean to suggest that experience tends to repeat the same story over and over again; it is like a symphony or sonata; the same theme keeps recurring, each time to be developed a little differently in combinations with other primary themes and secondary themes.

The simplest patterns are those with which the child is born. These are the patterns or responses which are released as soon as the child is placed for the first time in an environment which calls them forth. No training is necessary to elicit them. The infant cries at birth and its crying varies in expression, depending upon whether it has been long without food, or whether it is restricted in its movements; whether it is suddenly left unsupported in its position, or whether it has heard loud noises. These are the only circumstances, as far as we know, which will elicit crying in the early days of infancy. The crying may be stopped by feeding the child or petting it.

These simple emotional patterns are the thematic units with which you will have to begin your composition: *unhappiness* with hunger; *fear* when support is suddenly released or when there are loud noises; and *rage* when the child is restricted in its movements. What is built up out of these elementary emotions of discomfort, rage, fear, unhappiness will depend on how you manipulate the environment. The principles governing this manipulation are simple, but they require consistency and knowledge of the end to be accomplished.

The first principle on which the manipulation of the environment depends is the infant's capacity to learn with amazing facility. The frequency with which pain and fear responses are called out will depend in the first place upon how often you present the cause for them; and in the second place how often you allow these responses to be followed by stimuli which give the child satisfaction—such as food or petting.

The second principle that must be known is that casual, unrelated things in the environment soon come to have the same stimulus value as the primary or original emotion-arousing experience. For

instance, a loud noise arouses fear. Dogs come to elicit fear because they make noises; the fur of dogs arouses fear because it is presented to the child with noise. One can make the child afraid of any animal or even of his own blocks if they are presented with loud noise. It is the business of the parent to understand that these new conditionings are not just whimsical, inevitable things, but that the laws governing them can be readily worked out and that when chance establishes a wrong or undesirable conditioning it must be deliberately controlled and broken up. A pattern of fear, for instance, can be torn down and destroyed by associating the cause of it with something which gives pleasure to the child.

During these early years of the child's life, the environmental forces working on the child in the form of its parent's or nurse's attitudes are apt to be directed purely by emotion, and not to be thought out or intellectually controlled. Feeling that the child is too tiny to understand or to be understood, the parent and the nurse constantly bring to the child the same emotional attitudes over and over again as environment. This tends to fix the child's responses in definite patterns. The child's responses or patterns can be controlled if the parent translates his own emotional attitudes into a thought-out plan.

Up to the time the infant begins to talk, its only mode of expression has been large body movements and elementary undifferentiated responses. Gradually this tendency to use all of the body to act out each response or desire is replaced by smaller movements involving only parts of the body, and by more refined and at the same time more complex emotional combinations. The child begins to imitate, to distinguish between itself and the outside world, to be able better to direct the finer movements of its body. Old reactions fall into disuse or must be replaced by new ones, to meet these new impulses and reactions. New secondary themes are calling for expression, and old primary themes must temporarily yield. If the way is closed by a fixity of bad habits built on primary themes, development is delayed or thwarted or permanently side-tracked.

*From an address delivered at the Conference "Concerning Parents," Baltimore, Md., November 30, 1926

The appearance of language, while it greatly facilitates the natural growth and development of the child, offers at the same time a serious difficulty. As the child learns the names of things, discovers how to get things more rapidly through asking for them, and gets praise from his parents for talking, the chief interest of both parent and child is apt to be directed toward the development of the child's language and intelligence patterns, and the rest of the activity of the child may remain undirected and uncared for. Just so long as the child does not become a problem of discipline, little attention is directed toward what it learns to do with its hands or body; or what emotional patterns it learns to use.

The nursery school and kindergarten movements are a recognition of the fact that children have been learning to do things all too late: that the process of systematic learning to use the hands can be started much earlier than was formerly thought, and can be developed to a much higher point than we have been willing to admit. Parents are apt to block their children in this learning to do things with their hands because they think of manipulation activities as largely inherited. It should be remembered that the father teaches the son only the things he knows how to do and is interested in. If the child accidentally discovers during his play that certain things win the approval of parents, he continues along this line.

It is, however, the emotional and inspirational patterns which come under the most flagrant neglect, and these are the patterns which make or spoil the life of the child and the future adult. We are apt to think of disposition or character as a fixed quantity and regard the child as naturally irritable or naturally sullen or wilful or cheerful or day-dreaming or temperamental or affectionate. So great is this tendency to think of these modes of emotional responses as fixed that each one of them is attributed to one of the child's parents or grandparents. This method of releasing one's self from responsibility is comfortable if one thinks of these emotional patterns as born in the child, but the parent will have to face frankly the fact that even if the patterns are inherited they can still be modified and changed almost at will. This is not a question of conviction but an experimentally proved fact.

Here is a typical case. A boy of three and a half years had a mother who had been petted and spoiled by her own mother, but whose husband refused to continue this petting and spoiling.

During the first years of her marriage the young wife gave her child the fondling she was denied. She kept him with her constantly, and he became so dependent that nothing gave him any satisfaction that was not done at the end of her apron strings. When any attempt was made to get him to do things by himself, there were tears and unhappiness. This became so marked that the mother consented to listen to the father's protests, and to leave the child alone for one hour each day. For the first twelve days this resulted in an hour of weeping or raging. On the thirteenth day came calm and a turning to toys without further ado. When the primitive patterns of tears and rage proved no longer a serviceable method, the child substituted what was at hand. Today he is alone or with other children most of the day, but the original pattern of tearfulness has to be handled in summary fashion to prevent it from becoming fixed again.

This tendency to react with tearfulness and depression after the deprivation of satisfaction is a dangerous one, and the oftener it is repeated, the more readily it is set off. There is a tremendous danger that moods of unhappiness in the child will be sentimentalized by parents, especially if they, themselves, have this mode of response. The average person accepts depression as inevitable, and accepts no responsibility for it. It is true that once the pattern of the easy arousal of unhappiness is established, certain circumstances will arouse depression quite automatically and the duration of the mood is apt to be fixed. A wise parent can, through consistent good humor and cheerfulness, almost always induce his child to substitute smiling and good-humored reactions for unhappiness, so that the depressive pattern never becomes conditioned in the child at all.

Again, parents are often too eager to help their child avoid situations which, in their own childhood, caused them unhappiness and pain. They try to spare their child all unhappy experiences and to guard him against even the pain that is requisite to learn how to handle pain. The child so shielded has no chance to learn the mechanism of combating immediate desire, and develops no patterns to guard himself against disappointment. You can help him to learn that there is a tomorrow and that only by control today can the tomorrow be made satisfactory. Do not be afraid to teach your child self-imposed discipline. Life can only be lived satisfactorily through self-imposed restriction.

The Anxious Parent

By Louise Brink

OUR age, with all its faults, is an enlightened one. Its directness of inquiry none of us can escape. We are forced, as never before, to face the truth concerning our children and ourselves. Where ignorance once permitted at least a superficial contentment, there is now apprehension.

There is, therefore, a constant demand from parents for assistance. Specific problems of children's conduct or development are brought to child study groups by anxious parents, and the group meets this demand by consideration of each individual case. When the situation seems to call for special treatment, it directs parents to agencies established for dealing with such specific conditions, or to a psychiatrist or psychologist.

Child study, however, has a broader function than that of meeting the immediate needs and problems of which the parent is aware. It aids the parent to a clearer knowledge not only of the child's nature but of the parent's own psychical makeup and the complexities of the child-parent relationship. For it is this relationship which determines largely the attitudes which the child will develop, and the adjustments he will make, both in the home and in the larger world where his life is to be spent.

Much of this work with parents is done in child study groups where opinions and vital facts are exchanged and situations are reviewed from all avenues of approach. Parents are brought to ask themselves some searching questions: Will their assumed guidance blunt and stifle the child's natural impulses and aptitudes? Will the child's character be marred by parental interference?

But group study and discussion are sometimes not adequate to meet difficulties which arise out of the very intensity of the relationship between parent and child. Individual matters are often too keenly felt for open discussion in the group. The unwillingness lies below the surface in the emotional resistance which prevents us all from openly facing and attacking our difficulties.

A mother, for example, feels helpless in regard to her daughter who is entering adolescence. The latter is noisy and unruly at home, while at school she is a well-behaved and interested pupil, showing more than average ability. She is a happy playmate among her companions, though at home, along with her impetuous, unruly behavior, she

shows marked shyness and reserve. A brother, little younger than herself, is assertive, good-naturedly aggressive toward his older sister. His mother has encouraged the boy's liveliness, for it has always been kept within bounds by a warmly affectionate nature. The mother's attempts to point an example through the conduct of a younger sister have only widened a separation between herself and her older daughter.

Such a mother, striving to the best of her conscious knowledge for fairness toward each child, does not see how much the situation is one of her own creating. Emotions cloud the relationships. She must have help to turn her attention to herself away from the immediate problem presented by the children. She must look back to her attitude toward the daughter from the beginning of their relationship. What was the effect upon this first-born daughter when a son appeared to engage the mother's love? Did the mother unconsciously intensify a contrast in the children's natures which drove the girl defensively into herself and caused her to transfer her positive activities to relationships formed outside the home? Such are some of the questions which the mother begins, under guidance, to ask herself. And applying this method of insight to herself, she is awakened to the emotional factors at work in the children as well as in herself and to an understanding of her own share in creating the difficulties of their mutual relationship. This point of view is achieved not so much through intellectual self-questioning as through the provision of opportunity for freer emotional outlet.

It is in situations like these that a single individual, with insight and the authority of a knowledge of psychology, may offer an outlet which group discussion cannot give. In personal interviews with a psychologist, questions more or less obscure can be examined in greater detail than in the group. The Child Study Association has therefore added such a psychologist to its staff and refers to her parents whose problems in relation to their children, as revealed in child study groups, seem to need more intensive study and assistance than the group can give.

It is hoped that through such intensive study individual parents will be helped to that freedom which comes from knowledge and control of the forces which vitally affect this relationship.

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EDITORS

DAPHNE DRAKE

MARY PADDOCK

JOSSETTE FRANK

CÉCILE PILPEL

SIDONIE MATSNER GRUENBERG

JANE H. POSNER

MARION M. MILLER

HELEN A. STOREY

CORA FLUSSER, *Business Manager*

Mental Health

THE effectiveness of every human being depends upon his state of mental health. The amount of intelligence that a person has is determined, barring accidents, by the factors of his heredity; the development and functioning and eventual usefulness of this intelligence depend to a very great extent upon the balance, the emotional stability, in short, upon the whole attitude toward life of each individual. A sound adjustment to people and conditions, an honest facing of reality, are acquired through conscious and unconscious processes during the growing period.

The parent and the teacher have a double responsibility, for children absorb not only what their elders consciously teach, but also the more subtle personality or behavior traits of which adults are the unconscious models. Nor can the child escape the direct effects of a daily contact with adults who are themselves not well adjusted to whatever situation confronts them. An unhappy, unsatisfied parent inclines to give his child either too much or too little affection; to make him either over-dependent or rebellious; to block or to hasten his development. A parent or teacher whose life is well-rounded, whose interests are vital and wholesome, will create an atmosphere of satisfaction and a sense of safety that carries over to the child, even in the earliest years. It is upon the parent's own state of mental health, primarily, that the mental health of the child must depend.

Institute on Parental Education

TO meet the growing need for help in organizing available experience and principles on the part of leaders in parental education, the Child Study Association of America is conducting an Institute at its headquarters, 54 West 74th Street, New York City, from January 17th to 28th. The Institute will consist of three main

parts: lectures, round table conferences, and pre-arranged and directed observation.

"Contributions of Modern Science to Parental Education" is the theme of the ten lectures which will be held at the Hotel Majestic in connection with the Institute. (Detailed announcement on page 9.) Parental education will be considered from all angles: the biological, psychological, sociological, and spiritual.

Each afternoon at 2:00, except afternoons scheduled for observation, there will be round table conferences led by Ruth Andrus, Sidonie M. Gruenberg, Mrs. Howard S. Gans, Ethel Puffer Howes, Violet A. Jersawit, Gertrude Laws, Edward C. Lindeman, Lois Hayden Meek, Marion M. Miller, Harry A. Overstreet, Mary Paddon, Nellie L. Perkins, Cécile Pilpel, Margaret J. Quilliard, Lucy Retting, Edna Noble White, Helen T. Woolley. The subjects for discussion will be: new conditions that influence the function of the parent, study groups as a means of parental education, available literature, methods of instruction and direction, organization of study groups, methods of evaluating parental education, and methods of adult education. There will be a talk on the work of the Summer Play Schools Friday morning, January 21st. Saturday morning, January 22nd, Dr. Jessie C. Fenton will discuss "Habits in Young Children." On the remaining mornings from 9:30 to 10:30 there will be informal conferences with leaders actually engaged in parental education.

An additional feature of the Institute will be the pre-arranged and directed observation, to which will be devoted the afternoons of January 18th, 21st, 25th and 27th. Special opportunities will be provided for observing study groups of the Child Study Association, affiliated groups, mothers' clubs, church and other institutional work. Arrangements will be made for visits to clinics, juvenile courts, nursery schools, day nurseries and other agencies dealing with children.

The Association has been fortunate in securing as speakers eminent scientists and leaders in the field, and the cooperation of organizations of allied interest. Registration in the Institute is limited in number and open only to men and women who are engaged in work with parents or foster-parents and qualified persons who are preparing for such work. In order, however, that interested lay people and professional workers, unable to attend the entire Institute, may share in the work, the lectures will be open to the public.

Child Study Activities

Dr. Ferenczi on Psycho-analysis

DR. S. FERENCZI of Buda-Pest, psycho-analyst and author of "Contributions to Psycho-analysis," addressed a large audience of members and friends of the Child Study Association of America on December 2nd. His subject was "Adjustment in the Family and Beyond."

The most vital contribution of psycho-analysis to modern scientific knowledge, Dr. Ferenczi stated, is the discovery of the fact that psychotic and neurotic disturbances are caused by childhood experiences rather than by heredity. Psycho-analysis acknowledges heredity as an important factor in life, but recognizes that what is inborn is a disposition toward the environment and that the character of the individual is the result of his habitual reaction to his environment. The effect of education on the personality is therefore of incalculable significance.

Dr. Ferenczi, recognizing the difficulty of giving a clear definition of education, offered as the most satisfactory for his purpose: education is the incorporation of qualities belonging to one person into another personality. The essential part of education is not teaching, but example, imitation, identification. Character is built up through the reaction of external experience upon the particular disposition during the first five years of life. The early environment is therefore of paramount importance in the life of the individual and, since we all forget the most disturbing experiences of early childhood, we are all in some sense neurotic or amnestic.

The child, in the course of his development, must adapt him-

self to a number of "traumata" or shocks, the first of which is birth. This is the easiest and the best prepared for. Next comes the "trauma" of the weaning process, which, unless properly conducted, may cause serious difficulties in later life. Another of the early traumata is caused by the necessity for the child to acquire habits of cleanliness. Interest in the primitive functions of life is present in every child and leads to autoerotic satisfactions. When these are mistakenly treated by threats, the result may be a loss of ability to love in later life.

Children's Book Exhibit Well Attended

THE annual exhibit of children's books at the Headquarters of the Child Study Association of America on December 6, 7 and 8 attracted unusual attention. Two interesting new features were added: an exhibit of constructive toys and a shelf of music books for parents. Musical instruments

made by children themselves were shown.

The exhibit opened with an address by Miss Anne Carroll Moore, supervisor of work with children at the New York Public Library. Miss Moore stated that it is exceedingly difficult to decide just what book is right for just what age. A margin must always be left for the unexpected—diversity of taste is much more sharply marked in childhood than in adult years. Furthermore, great literature is always ageless in its appeal.

Miss Moore stressed the need of wholesome humor as an element in children's books, and cited the Caldecott books and "A Book of Cheerful Cats" as examples of funny books which children like.

Ten Lectures on Contributions of Modern Science to Parental Education

given as part of the

Institute on Parental Education

January 17th to 28th, 1927

mornings at eleven, at the Hotel Majestic,
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Jan.

17 Heredity and Individual Variation
Michael Guyer

18 Stages in Mental Growth
Arnold Gesell

19 Relation of Physiological States to Behavior
and Learning
Seymour De Witt Ludlum

20 The Value of the Organic Point of View
Benjamin C. Gruenberg

21 Habit Formation as a Factor in Mental Development
Helen T. Woolley

24 Appearance and Development of Emotions
Joseph Jastrow

25 The Unification of Conflicting Trends in Personality
Speaker to be announced

26 The Family, Its Development and Meaning
Ernest R. Groves

27 The Dynamics of Family Relationships
Eilton G. Mayo

28 Parental Ideals in the Guidance of Youth
Anna Gorlin Spencer

Lectures open to the public; series, \$10, single lectures, \$1.50;
to members of Child Study Association:
series, \$5, single lectures, 75c.

For further information write to

Child Study Association of America

54 West 74th Street

New York City

Daydreaming and Adjustment to Reality

Based on the Minutes of a Child Study Group

Sources:

Miller, H. C.—*The New Psychology and the Parent.* Chap.

III. Seltzer, 1923.

Morgan, J. J. B.—*Psychology of the Unadjusted School Child.* Chaps. VI and VII. Macmillan, 1924.

Green, G. H.—*Psychoanalysis in the Classroom.* Chaps. II and III. Putnam, 1922.

IN opening the meeting the leader stressed the fact that the child's future happiness and usefulness depend, in large measure, upon his ability to adjust to reality and to the persons and laws which constitute his environment. The consideration of daydreaming centered about the definition quoted from J. Harvey Robinson's "Mind in the Making," describing daydreaming as reverie in which ideas flow in free association according to our wishes or fears, but without any conscious laborious control or guidance—egocentric in nature, even as is reality.

Dr. H. Crichton Miller, discussing "problems of authority and reality," points out that since the child's chief goal is the achievement of self-realization, he should learn to express himself satisfactorily in as many of his relationships as possible. To accomplish this he must achieve not only a degree of social efficiency but, more important still, an internal harmony that can be attained only by learning how to adjust himself to life. This necessary achievement of his self-realization is sometimes blocked by parents or teachers through the unwise use of authority. Making unjustifiable demands for self-restraint upon a child inhibits legitimate activity or expression. Again, we are apt to block his progress toward self-realization if we make reality too harsh and uncompromising, too difficult for him to accept. In this case two mechanisms offer themselves to him: suggestibility and phantasy. Both of these mechanisms are of immense value—suggestibility paves the way for the child's acceptance of authority; phantasy provides him with a way of escape from contact with an over-harsh reality. But both must diminish almost to the point of complete disappearance as the child grows up. The danger to be guarded against is the possibility that the child will either become ultra-suggestible, or else will escape into a permanent phantasy world of his own, refusing to face reality.

Dr. John J. B. Morgan finds that daydreams always have the following characteristics: they are pleasurable in content—more pleasurable than reality; they express wishes which are either impossible or very difficult to attain in reality. This form of phantasy reaches its highest peak at adolescence, when the individual is confronted with a number of problems the difficulty of which he dimly recognizes and concerning which he is often discouraged from speaking. Daydreamers are reticent about divulging their daydreams, but if we can get at their content we find that they throw valuable light on inner conflicts and wishes.

Daydreaming is dangerous only if it is used as an escape from reality—if the child becomes satisfied with imaginary victory instead of achieving real ends. "Those who have the training of children should see that they win some battles in the moral, intellectual and physical spheres, even if one has to distort reality in order to make the victory apparent. By all means, have real victory if possible; but if it is not, then make some sort of victory possible, even if it has to be invented. Never permit a child to conduct a losing battle, retreating and losing ground every day."

Daydreams can be used constructively as spurs to ambition. When the child attempts to reach actually what he had pictured to himself in imagination, then daydreams are a successful and wholesome incentive.

Dr. G. H. Green points out that children's minds wander in the classroom because they must resort to their daydreams for the satisfaction of their assertive instincts. In the old-fashioned classroom, it was only the teacher who had an opportunity to satisfy the natural instinct for self-display and leadership. The children's attentiveness improved only when the newer schools relaxed discipline and gave the children's self-assertive instinct a chance to function in class work.

Daydreams are valuable to students of childhood because they are documents emanating from the child himself which give, in language that is easily interpreted, exactly what he wishes. The lonely child, for example, daydreams of imaginary companions. The shy, apprehensive child daydreams of his eloquence and bravery. Daydreams

indicate the child's way of approaching life. Day-dreams are selfish, egotistic, and pleasurable retreats from reality.

Discussion:

It was pointed out that if we want to help a child in his development, it is well to keep in mind the personality makeup of the particular child. It may be wise to encourage a child to tell his daydreams, but this must be done casually, lest he be given an idea that everything he dreams or does is of vast importance to his family.

Discussion then centered about Morgan's suggestion that children should be allowed to win battles "even if one has to distort reality in order to make the victory apparent." In illustration of this one member told of encouraging her children in their practice of music by telling them that they were progressing beautifully—far more praise than their performance warranted. It was pointed out that such over-emphasis is not desirable—it would be wise to praise the children for the effort they had put into their practice and point out the remaining difficulties still to be overcome. We should not encourage our children to be too easily satisfied with their achievements. It is as bad to make success too easy as to make it hard. Illustrating this point a case was cited of a six-year-old boy whose parents made him feel like a conqueror by letting him win all games, and by praising him lavishly for all his accomplishments. When he went to camp, he could not get on well with the other children because he was enraged when he did not win every competition. One member presented the situation of a mother who handled this matter successfully by greeting her child's "I can't" with a cheerful, "You've done that much. You can do more."

A member asked whether imaginary playmates were an illustration of daydreaming or imagination. She reported that her own child had very early invented two imaginary playmates with whom he plays whenever he is alone, although he plays socially with other children as well. It was pointed out that such imaginary play is quite common, but that while the mother must not ruthlessly deny the child's imaginary playmates, it is well for her to help the child differentiate between real and fancied objects and activities. This she can do by entering to some extent into the play.

It was suggested that the problem of daydreaming might also be handled from a different angle: Does the child feel any lack in the environment which makes her resort to this compensating sat-

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isfaction? For example, a child brought up by a microbe-fearing nurse who guards her zealously from dirt, toys and other children, is almost inevitably driven to seek her satisfactions in the realm of imagination. In such a case it is better to effect a radical change in the whole situation than to concentrate on the immediate problem. One mother told how she had diverted her child's daydreaming to an interest in music, drawing, and other means of self-expression. Another had filled the child's need by giving him a pet dog.

Parenthood Conference at Los Angeles

THAT the subject of modern parenthood is a vital and engrossing one, was again evidenced by the large attendance of the Southern California Conference at Los Angeles, December fifteenth to eighteenth. From four to five thousand people were present, having come from all parts of California to hear the lectures and discussions. Twenty-six organizations cooperated, including women's clubs, colleges, the Los Angeles Parent-Teacher Federation, the Los Angeles chapter of the American Red Cross, Y.M.C.A., Y.W.C.A., the public library, chamber of commerce, Child Guidance Clinic and Chapter 115 of the Child Study Association of America.

"The Importance of the Early Years of Childhood," "Education for Parenthood," "The Home in a Changing World," "The Child, the Parent, and the School," "Education for Spiritual Growth," "Changing Views of Family Relationships," and "Objectives of Parent Education" were the interesting themes of the various sessions. A noon luncheon, on Wednesday at the Biltmore Hotel, under the auspices of the California Congress of Parents and Teachers, varied the program.

Among the speakers at the Conference were: Sir John Adams, Bird T. Baldwin, Walter F. Dexter, Henry Dietrich, J. D. Dunshee, E. Van Norman Emery, Jessie C. Fenton, Mrs. Howard S. Gans, Mrs. Arnold Gesell, Barbara Greenwood, Ernest R. Groves, Mrs. Florence Kane, William Kirk, William Palmer Lucas, Robert A. Millikan, Frederick Roman, Aaron J. Rosanoff, Miriam Van Waters, Frankwood E. Williams, Frederick P. Woellner, Elizabeth L. Woods, Edward Yeomans.

An interesting feature was the Saturday morning session which was devoted to round table discussions on family relationships, newer methods in education, and child study groups.

BOOK REVIEWS

For Study Group Leaders

Child Study Groups. A Manual for Leaders. Suggestions for Planning, Organizing and Conducting Groups for Child Study. Child Study Association of America, 1926. 30 pages. 25 cents.

In the development of any phase of education the appearance of a manual for teachers or leaders has been looked upon as a landmark. Such a landmark has been reached in the development of parental education. The movement of parents to take advantage of what science is revealing has grown so rapidly that there is great need for the kind of practical, convenient handbook which "Child Study Groups" supplies. It is significant and appropriate that this manual for group leaders should come from the hands of the Child Study Association of America, the organization which founded this movement.

The introduction to the manual goes beyond itself and answers not only the question, "What is a child study group?" but "Why is a child study group?" This is done in a clear and convincing way. There follows a simple and direct description of the most satisfactory practice that the long experience of the Child Study Association of America has developed concerning all the details of organization.

The manual contains also an interesting list of subjects upon which programs for homogeneous groups might be based. The brief description of each subject is sufficient to enable a leader to answer the questions the members of a group might ask concerning its scope and applicability to their own problems. The varied types of situations, involving the parent-child relationship, which are cited should give a leader a grasp of the child study method of approach to any typical problem that might arise in her group.

The entire manual emphasizes the vital principle of placing upon the individual members the responsibility for the preparation and discussion of child study material.

Details of procedure for affiliation with the Child Study Association of America, and of the kinds of service available from that organization are so clearly and briefly stated that the leader of study groups has here much important equipment in a convenient compass.

GERTRUE LAWS,

Director of *Child Study*, Monmouth County Social Service.

What of the Family?

The Drifting Home. By Ernest R. Groves. Houghton Mifflin Company, 1926. 217 pages. \$1.75.

D R. GROVES' book is written with the conviction that there is a great need for improvement in the home life in this country.

The "drifting home" is pictured as a type intermediate between the good home and the bad—a bewildered home, "torn from its anchorage in the elemental needs of human nature by the swiftly running current of modern civilization. Although science, the creator of this modern world, is the real source of much of the trouble, it is largely to science that the perplexed home must turn for help. We must make use of the science of human behavior; to parents especially must this knowledge be brought, for making the delicate adjustments of modern home life."

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THE baby is pretty well cared for. In fact, he is getting rather the best of it. The intensive education of the past few years, promoted by intelligent people of altruistic spirit, has had gratifying success. Comparatively few babies today have to make their start in life with the physical odds against them.

But most of this good work has been necessarily specific in nature. It has had nothing to do with the child after his emergence from babyhood.

The latter stage presents a larger problem, more subtle, more difficult to come to grips with because of the adult egotism behind which it is barricaded. There is nothing specific about it. It must be approached in a general way, from many sides at once.

The method and content of formal education improves slowly. But the home remains the chief educative agency. Improvement there can come only through greater enlightenment on the part of parents, through the conquest of their personal superstitions and inhibitions, and through a broadening of their comprehension of life.

Particularly in 1926 The New Republic has, and more particularly in 1927 it will devote itself to the development of superior children by stressing the need for superior-minded parents. In every vital field of thought, tendencies and events will be studied and discussed with that impartiality, force, and sweep of understanding which long ago brought recognition to The New Republic as the voice of liberalism in America.

It is one of those rare magazines that succeed in projecting a share of life's fourth dimension into view upon the printed page. It is one of the indispensables of this confused age to people who wish to inculcate in their children a sound idealism and habits of independent thinking.

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This is indeed Dr. Groves' main thesis—that it is useless to meet the problems of the present with the equipment of yesterday; the home must change with the changing times. Such social movements as the passing of man's dominance, the beginnings of contraceptive control of birth, the increasing ease of divorce, and the wider distribution of luxury have all had a profound influence on home life, but the adjustment to these changed conditions has lagged sadly behind.

In the taking over of many of the family's functions by the community, Dr. Groves believes that the family has not lost but gained in importance: it has "risen from the position of maid-of-all-work to that of administrator"; it will direct and co-ordinate the child's various activities and interpret to him his experiences outside the home.

Dr. Groves states that educated people do not necessarily make educated parents: the instruction must be specifically applied to parenthood." The need for this is brought forcibly to one's notice in the habit clinics for young children that exist in many cities. These clinics are really—says our author—more for the parents than for the children, since it is usually the parents who must be given new attitudes before the child-problem is solved.

The really satisfactory family must be a wholesome association for all of its members, adults and children alike; and it is increasingly clear that as a result of our "eight-cylinder civilization" training for marriage and parenthood becomes more and more necessary.

E. M. O.

Suggested Reading in Recent Magazines

"*Mental Health.*" By Dr. Douglas A. Thom. Child Welfare Magazine. September, 1926.

Suggestions to Parent-Teacher Associations in carrying out mental hygiene programs suitable for large cities and small communities. A bibliography of pamphlets and books is appended.

"*Problems of Delinquency among Girls.*" By Kate Burr Johnson. Journal of Social Hygiene. October, 1926.

Among the needs to recognize for preventing delinquency, the author stresses "thorough and scientific sex instruction . . . real and inclusive education"; individual differences, mental, physical and emotional; "a broader and more Christian attitude toward those who would reconstruct a broken life."

"*The Land of Make-Believe.*" By Katharine Brown McAlpin. Mental Hygiene Bulletin. November, 1926.

Imaginary flights: their balm and dangers. Constructive suggestions for leading the child from fancy to reality.

This Month's Contributors

Esther L. Richards, M.D., is Associate Psychiatrist at Johns Hopkins Hospital.

Leslie B. Hohman, M.D., is Associate in Clinical Psychiatry, Johns Hopkins Hospital.

Louise Brink, Ph.D., is a consulting psychologist and is associated with the Child Study Association of America.

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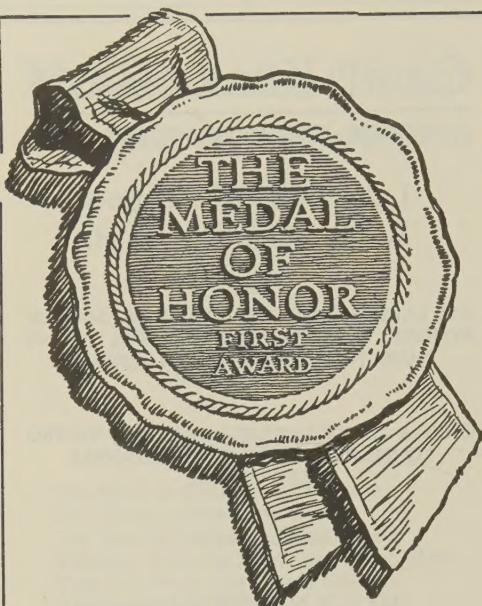
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